

The CCD camera (the imaging device) 30 is disposed so that the secondary image forming surface 29 becomes coincident with an imaging surface 31. The CCD camera 30 captures an image of the measuring mark 52. Then, an image signal obtained by the CCD camera 30 is sent to the image processing device 35, wherein the image signal is processed as will be described later on. As can be known from this arrangement, the measuring mark 52 and the imaging surface 31 have a conjugate positional relationship. Note that the CCD camera 30 is so supported by an imaging position adjustment mechanism 45 as to be movable in the X-Y directions (i.e., movable within a plane extending in the right-and-left directions perpendicular to the sheet surface).

Page 14, line 21-page 15, line 13, delete current paragraph and insert therefore: /

The image processing device 35 processes the image of the L/S mark pattern captured by the CCD camera 30, thereby obtaining an intensity of the image signal. A profile of the intensity becomes as shown in Fig. 4C. Herein, though the signal intensity decreases in the recessed positions of the linear marks 61-67, a signal intensity difference ΔI in the recessed positions on both right and left sides of every linear mark, is obtained, and these signal intensity differences ΔI of all the linear marks 61-67 are averaged, thereby obtaining a value Q ($Q = 1/7 \times \Sigma (\Delta I/I)$) representing an asymmetry of the L/S mark pattern image. Next, the L/S mark pattern 60 is moved in the Z-direction by moving the stage 50 in the up-and-down direction (the Z-direction), and the value Q is obtained per height position (the position in the Z-direction), thus obtaining a focus characteristic of the value Q . This focus characteristic is expressed by, for instance, QZ curves as shown in Fig. 5.

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The CCD camera captures an image of the measuring mark 52 by use of the visual fields areas exhibiting the characteristics shown in Figs. 6A-6C, and the